

Introduction

Remedial Action Plans and Areas of Concern

In 1987, the United States and Canada (Parties) signed a Protocol that included a commitment to develop and implement, in cooperation with state and provincial governments, Remedial Action Plans (RAPs). The goal of RAPs is to restore and protect beneficial uses in the 42 currently identified Areas of Concern (AOCs) in the Great Lakes basin. The AOCs are geographic areas where human activities have caused or are likely to cause impairment of beneficial uses or the area's ability to support aquatic life. The Protocol states that the Parties will report on progress in restoring AOCs and calls on the Commission to review RAPs being developed and implemented for the identified AOCs in the Great Lakes basin. Pursuant to the amended Agreement, the Commission reviews and comments on RAPs during three stages: first, when the definition of the problem has been completed; second, when remedial and regulatory measures are selected; and finally, when monitoring indicates that impaired beneficial uses have been restored.

The Protocol directs that each RAP embody a systematic and comprehensive ecosystem approach to restoring and protecting beneficial uses and serve as an important step toward virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances and toward restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem. Further, the Parties, in cooperation with state and provincial governments, are to ensure that the public is consulted in all actions undertaken pursuant to Annex 2 of the Agreement.

For over a decade, the Commission has reviewed and assisted in the development of RAPs, and expressed concern with overall progress in the development and implementation of cleanup and prevention strategies in some AOCs. In 1996, the Commission adopted a new initiative called the Status Assessment process to further examine progress toward restoration of beneficial uses in specific AOCs or open lake waters.

For More Information

For more information regarding the Commission, you may contact Commission public information services at:

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Information concerning this Status Assessment can be obtained by contacting the Great Lakes Regional Office:

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Information can also be obtained from the Commission web page at www.ijc.org or by e-mail to commission@windsor.ijc.org.